

Don't Ruin Thanksgiving with Too Much Alcohol

Have a healthy and happy holiday celebration

Department of Health & Mental Hygiene News Release

Baltimore, MD (November 23, 2010) As family and friends reunite and celebrate during this Thanksgiving holiday, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) urges all adults, especially young adults, to protect themselves and the lives and health of loved ones by using a little common sense. Adults who choose to drink are urged to do so responsibly and absolutely must avoid driving. Along with Christmas, New Year's, Halloween and St. Patrick's Day, Thanksgiving has become a time when young adults in particular gather in bars and restaurants to celebrate, especially on 'Thanksgiving Eve,' the Wednesday night before the big day.

"We're urging all who venture out to celebrate with family and friends this holiday to act responsibly and avoid ruining your Thanksgiving or someone else's," said John M. Colmers, DHMH Secretary. "As we gather together in good spirits, let's not forget that too much alcohol can be deadly for you and those around you."

In 2009, Maryland State Police arrested 125 drunk drivers from Wednesday through Sunday of the Thanksgiving weekend. Based on that figure, it is estimated that 350 to 400 drunk driving arrests were made statewide during the last Thanksgiving holiday.

Binge drinking is defined as four or more drinks for women and five or more drinks for men in a two-hour period. Binge drinking is associated with many health problems including injury, sexually transmitted diseases, liver and cardiovascular disorders, poor control of diabetes and infants suffering fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.

"This and every holiday, keep an eye on the alcohol intake of your adult friends and family members. Routinely talk with your underage children about the dangers of alcohol and be sure that non-alcoholic beverages are plentiful," said Frances Phillips, Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services. "If necessary, step in to protect the irresponsible drinker, and those around him or her, from becoming another traffic or emergency room statistic."